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# The Lilian Edwards Prize Essay

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## SOCIAL TRAINING NEEDED FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHING

IDA WIGGIN  
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE COLLEGE  
SENIOR CLASS

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DURHAM, N. H.  
1919

LILIAN S. EDWARDS PRIZE.—A prize given by Mrs. Lilian S. Edwards, of Sanbornville, N. H., for the publishing and distribution of the best thesis on a sociological subject written by a student for the Department of Sociology during the second and third terms of the college year, 1918-1919.

The papers presented in competition for this prize were read by Mrs. Lilian C. Streeter, chairman of the Children's Commission, Miss Luella Dickerman, Principal Parker School and Rev. George Reed, D. D., all of Concord, N. H. The prize was awarded to Miss Ida Wiggin of Dover, a member of the Senior class.

The Lilian S. Edwards Prize for the college year 1916-1917 was awarded Miss Dorothy Hanson of Franklin, N. H. The subject of the thesis was "The Social Significance of the Motion Picture."

The Lilian S. Edwards Prize for the college year 1917-1918 was awarded Miss Frances Kling of Concord, N. H. The subject of the thesis was "Russia's Social Problem, The Peasant."

Copies of the latter thesis may be had from Professor E. R. Groves, Department of Sociology, Durham, N. H.

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Life is so short and time is so fleeting that purposeful men and women have always wanted to make the most of each day, perhaps particularly in recent years, when our civilization has become so complex and often so distractingly varied and hurried. All the more essential, therefore, has become the knowledge of the best and easiest and quickest ways of doing the things that lead to the efficient life. As a nation is made up of individuals, so a nation of efficient individuals is an efficient nation, provided of course, that personal efficiency includes the ability to work harmoniously and well in co-operative or group action. The entrance of America into the struggle for world democracy emphasized and accentuated in the minds of our people the great importance of personal and social efficiency.

If the principles underlying efficient action need to be learned and applied generally, they are of as great importance to high school teachers. If in school, under competent teachers, pupils can grasp the general principles that are at the basis of all success and then can apply them to the various employments which they enter, how great a prevention of failure, or of success that is only meager, will result.

Our present college and university education gives young men and women almost no knowledge of the duties of citizenship, much less of leadership, whereas a somewhat different education might teach them something of both without omitting anything essential from the present course of study.

The aim of education should be to alter present institutions to conform to our better ideals as we become more socially intelligent and unselfish. It is an education primarily ethical, seeking to make clear by the study of the present and the past, that wherever men have developed from savagery, they have done so by achieving social ideals and by modifying their individual moral code to conform to the welfare of the race.

Four years of college or university training is the reasonable amount expected. If this four years' work is to be most effective, it needs conscious direction throughout. As things are now, some thousands of college graduates each year begin as High school teachers. How many of these undertook the whole or even a considerable part of their undergraduate work with a specific view to teaching? Probably much less than one half. These men and women are going out in our schools to teach languages, chemistry and mathematics often when they have studied few other subjects than these in college.

The basic principles of a scheme for the better adjustment of education to social needs are these:

1. It should develop appreciation—or a desire for the better things within reach of the individual in an advancing society.

2. It should provide information or give one access to a fund of valuable knowledge.

3. It should stimulate utilization, or give the individual the training necessary to lead him to use his ideals and his knowledge in efficient living.

In regard to the first principle, it should be remembered that desire is the basis of all effort. If education is to lead to progress it will be the result not only of wise direction, but of heroic struggle which can be obtained only through the development of intense desires. If pupils can be led to appreciate the values attached to any particular part of the curriculum, the foundation

for the effort necessary to master it, will have been laid.

Child psychology has taught us that the curriculum should fit the child and that the best way to teach desired things is to adapt them to the nature and wants of the pupils. To a certain extent this is true, and the best teachers are trying to understand the inner forces leading to children's efforts and to stimulate a desire for a particular kind of knowledge before the rote processes of acquiring it are enforced.

The second principle of socialization is that education should provide information, or a fund of useful knowledge.

In applying this principle, it should be remembered that all knowledge is not equally valuable and that since it is impossible to acquire all knowledge, some basis must be used in selecting from the knowledge fund. Knowledge must be selected with the social as well as the individual end in view. Thus we see that while fields of individual and social knowledge do not conflict, they may differ largely and neither can be safely neglected.

In the third principle of socialization comes the final principle in determining the end of education. Socialized education must be dynamic. In order to carry out a successful program a closer relationship must be established between the school and other organized agencies of active life.

The student needs to study a series of genuine and varying social situations. They must be vitalized human situations involving the use of the social motives and they win the attention of the learner best when they are chosen from present day social problems.

The attitude of the students depends wholly on the teacher and her training should include of course the study of the individual child. This involves primarily child psychology—but also considerable adolescent psychology and sociology. The old idea that the work of

the teacher is merely in the school room is dying out and the teacher is being trained to feel a certain responsibility for her pupils at all times. Ideally the high school teacher should be likable, inspiring, and intellectually suggestive to the pupils as well as efficient in causing them to make personal progress. This kind of teacher has an inexhaustible field in both the expressive and cooperative forms of school work.

There should be considerable difference in the training of teachers for rural schools and for city schools. At the present time the training of teachers for rural schools is in some states one of the most difficult problems.

Rural teachers have a greater responsibility. They must prepare themselves not only to conduct a rural school curriculum with effectiveness and enterprise, but also to stimulate the desire for rural progress. In their training school they must have opportunity to come into contact with all rural interests, and must have knowledge of rural community activities.

Any teacher, in country or city, should have appreciation of the significance of the home. She should understand the family in order to understand her pupils. A great deal of the success of the pupil depends upon his or her home environment. If the parents become interested in the school work, a load is removed from the teacher. Progress in interesting parents in school work is being made by the Parent-Teachers Association.

One of the greatest of many difficulties of school teachers arises from their failure to distinguish between discipline and teaching. The old order of conditions, wherein discipline was conceived to be most perfect when all children were so suppressed that quietness reigned and all moved as one, must pass. Order-to-day is quiet activity wherein each member of the class recognizes the rights of others and acts accordingly. This requires teaching. By teaching we mean the planning



and organizing of the work so that the pupils become seekers, searchers, and workers, requiring only now and then the formal presentation of a lesson.

At the present time the normal schools usually give only two years of training. Only of late has there been much emphasis given to sociology. It is fortunate that recently such marked progress has taken place in the normal schools in the application of sociology to the teacher's vocation. Colleges for some years have been giving courses of great value to prospective teachers.

The social education of women demands from now on the most scrupulous regard for the training of every normal girl. A truly socialized education will accordingly adapt the individual not merely to immediate social conditions but even more to those of the future.

A socialized education means, first of all—a liberalizing and liberating education of the mind; and the subjects which are especially adapted to achieve this, if we wish to maintain a free social life, are bound to receive primary consideration. Secondly, it consists of training which has for its aim both the development of the individual life and the adjustment of the individual to the needs of the social whole.

The social education of women must make adequate provision for vocational training. Moreover we are also beginning to perceive that all service is of social value, and that all constructive labor is perhaps more nearly of equal social worth than we had supposed. For this reason, if for no other, the social training of teachers must be brought to a far higher plane of ethical vision and enthusiasm.



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